

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

Vincent L. Barr, formerly SCDC # 245797,

) C/A No. 2:06-2201-CMC-RSC

)

Plaintiff,

)

)

vs.

)

) Report and Recommendation

Williamsburg County;

)

Alex Treme; and

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Curtis Keel;

)

)

Defendants.

Plaintiff, a pre-trial detainee, has filed this matter pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 seeking an arrest warrant for a probation agent (hereinafter “Keel”) alleging Keel “conspired against [the plaintiff’s] civil rights”. According to the complaint, plaintiff was sentenced to two (2) years for possession of cocaine and one (1) year for unlawful possession of a firearm in February of 1999. Plaintiff claims Keel and Williamsburg County conspired to impose a four (4) year<sup>1</sup> sentence upon him in 1999 “in violation of due process”. Plaintiff states the trial judge “never orally imposed” a sentence upon him.

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* complaint pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915, 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The review has been conducted in light of the following precedents: Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25, 112 S.Ct. 1728, 118 L.Ed.2d 340, 60 U.S.L.W. 4346 (1992); Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 324-325, (1989); Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction, 64 F.3d 951, (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1995)(*en banc*), *cert. denied*,

<sup>1</sup>

The undersigned presumes the plaintiff meant to say “three (3) years”, or in the alternative, that the plaintiff is serving a total of four (4) years for the cocaine and firearm charges.

Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction, 516 U.S. 1177 (1996); Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); and Boyce v. Alizaduh, 595 F.2d 948 (4th Cir. 1979). *Pro se* complaints are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, Gordon v. Leeke, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir.), *cert. denied*, Leeke v. Gordon, 439 U.S. 970 (1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a complaint filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. *See Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5, 9 (1980); and Cruz v. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint the plaintiff's allegations are assumed to be true. Fine v. City of New York, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2nd Cir. 1975). However, even under this less stringent standard, the complaint submitted in the above-captioned case is subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. Weller v. Department of Social Services, 901 F.2d 387, (4th Cir. 1990).

Plaintiff has requested that criminal action be taken against Keel. A private citizen however, does not have a judicially cognizable interest in the prosecution or non-prosecution of another person. *See Linda R.S. v. Richard D.*, 410 U.S. 614, 619 (1973).

The plaintiff can not seek to prosecute a defendant in a civil suit on behalf of himself or others. *See Linda R.S. v. Richard D.*, 410 U.S. 614, 619 (1973)(a private citizen does not have a judicially cognizable interest in the prosecution or non-prosecution of another person); Diamond v. Charles, 476 U.S. 54, 64-65 (1986)(*applying Linda R.S. v. Richard D.* and collecting cases); Doyle v. Oklahoma State Bar Ass'n, 998 F.2d 1559, 1566-1567 (10th Cir. 1993); Lane v. Correll, 434 F.2d 598, 600 (5th Cir. 1970); and Neitzke v. Williams, *supra* (although district courts should not blur the distinction between the standards applicable to a Rule 12(b)(6) dismissal for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted and a dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915 because a claim is

frivolous, a patently insubstantial complaint may be dismissed). Cf. Community for Creative Non-Violence v. Pierce, 252 U.S.App.D.C. 37, 786 F.2d 1199, 1201-1202 (D.C.Cir. 1986)(denying motion to disqualify Office of the United States Attorney); and Collins v. Palczewski, 841 F. Supp. 333, 340 (D.Nev. 1993)("Long ago the courts of these United States established that 'criminal statutes cannot be enforced by civil actions.'"). Secondly, since the plaintiff does not have a judicially cognizable interest in the criminal prosecution of another person, the plaintiff lacks standing to raise such a claim. Linda R.S. v. Richard D., supra, 410 U.S. at 619.

Closely on point is Leeke v. Timmerman, 454 U.S. 83, 86-87 (1981), which arose in South Carolina. In Leeke v. Timmerman, inmates who were allegedly beaten by prison guards sought criminal arrest warrants against the guards. The inmates presented sworn statements to a state magistrate, but the state magistrate, upon a Solicitor's request, declined to issue the warrants. In Leeke v. Timmerman, the Supreme Court of the United States reiterated its earlier holding in Linda R.S. v. Richard D., supra, and again ruled that a private citizen lacks a judicially cognizable interest in the criminal prosecution of other persons. Leeke v. Timmerman, supra, 454 U.S. at 86-87. Moreover, in its opinion in Leeke v. Timmerman, the Supreme Court of the United States cited a similar precedent from the Supreme Court of South Carolina. See Leeke v. Timmerman, supra, 454 U.S. at 87 n. 2, *citing State v. Addison*, 2 S.C. 356, 364 (1871).

In addition, Williamsburg County cannot be held responsible for actions taken by the Court of General Sessions (Circuit Court) for Williamsburg County. It can be judicially noticed that, in South Carolina, a county's authority over courts within its boundaries was abolished when Article V of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina was ratified in 1973. See Act No. 58, 1973 S.C. Acts 161; Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina; and State ex rel. McLeod v. Civil and Criminal Court of Horry County, 265 S.C. 114, 217 S.E.2d 23, 24 (1975).

Under the current version of Article V, Section 1, the Supreme Court of South Carolina, not

Williamsburg County, retains the *sole* authority to supervise courts in Williamsburg County. *See Spartanburg County Dept. of Social Services v. Padgett*, 296 S.C. 79, 370 S.E.2d 872, 875-876 & n. 1 (1988). By virtue of Article V, the County of Williamsburg does not exercise administrative or supervisory authority over municipal courts, magistrates' courts, or courts of the State of South Carolina located within the geographical boundaries of Williamsburg County. Consequently, Williamsburg County should be dismissed from this civil rights action because it was not responsible for the alleged violations of the plaintiff's rights during the relevant times at issue in the above-captioned case.

Furthermore, insofar as the plaintiff's subsequent conviction, related state court proceedings, and arrest are concerned, however, the § 1983 complaint is subject to summary dismissal because a right of action has not yet accrued. *See Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477 (1994):

We hold that, in order to recover damages for allegedly unconstitutional conviction or imprisonment, or for other harm whose unlawfulness would render a conviction or sentence invalid, . . . a § 1983 plaintiff must prove that the conviction or sentence has been reversed on direct appeal, expunged by executive order, declared invalid by a state tribunal authorized to make such a determination, or called into question by a federal court's issuance of a writ of habeas corpus, 28 U.S.C. § 2254. A claim for damages bearing that relationship to a conviction or sentence that has not been so invalidated is not cognizable under § 1983. Thus, when a state prisoner seeks damages in a § 1983 suit, the district court must consider whether a judgment in favor of the plaintiff would necessarily imply the invalidity of his conviction or sentence; if it would, the complaint must be dismissed unless the plaintiff can demonstrate that the conviction or sentence has already been invalidated.

*Heck v. Humphrey*, *supra*. *See also Schafer v. Moore*, 46 F.3d 43 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1995) ("Therefore, in light of *Heck*, the complaint was properly dismissed for failure to state a claim."); and *Woods v. Candela*, 47 F.3d 545 (2nd Cir. 1995) (*per curiam*) (plaintiff's conviction reversed by state court in 1993; hence, civil rights action timely filed), *cert. denied*, *Candela v. Woods*, 516 U.S. 808 (1995). *See also Brooks v. City of Winston-Salem, N.C.*, 85 F.3d 178 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996). *Accord Smith v. Holtz*, 879 F. Supp. 435 (M.D.Pa., March 24, 1995); *Burnside v. Mathis*, 2004 WL 2944092 (D.S.C.

2004).

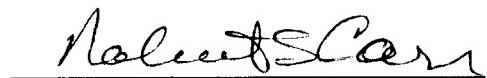
Since the plaintiff has failed to establish that his conviction has been reversed, expunged, or declared invalid by a state court, and no federal writ of habeas corpus has been issued, this action must be dismissed for failure to state a claim.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court dismiss the complaint in the above-captioned case *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process. *See Denton v. Hernandez, supra; Neitzke v. Williams, supra; Haines v. Kerner, supra; Brown v. Briscoe*, 998 F.2d 201, 202-204 & n. \* (4th Cir. 1993), replacing unpublished opinion originally tabled at 993 F.2d 1535 (4th Cir. 1993); *Boyce v. Alizaduh, supra; Todd v. Baskerville, supra*, 712 F.2d at 74; 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B); and 28 U.S.C. § 1915A [the court shall review, as soon as practicable after docketing, prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to any grounds for dismissal].

It is further recommended that the dismissal of this case be deemed a strike pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and (g). These provisions require an inmate to pay the filing fee for his case in advance after he has had three cases “dismissed on the grounds that it is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, unless the prisoner is under imminent danger of serious physical injury.” *Id.* As discussed above under *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477 (1994), a prisoner must show that his conviction or sentence has been reversed or vacated before he or she can recover in tort for the unlawful conviction or sentence. Where, as here, the conviction or sentence has not been overturned, the inmate’s constitutional tort action under § 1983 must be dismissed. Several courts have held that a dismissal under *Heck* constitutes a strike under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and (g). *See Sandles v. Randa*, 945 F. Supp. 169 (E.D. Wis. 1996); *Sanders v. DeTella*, 1997 WL 126866 (N.D. Ill. 1997) (unpublished); and *Grant v. Sotelo*, 1998 WL 740826 (N.D. Tex.

1998)(unpublished).\*\* See Also, Adepegba v. Hammons, 103 F. 3d 383, 384 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996)(noting that district court dismissed a claim as frivolous under Heck and declining to address the propriety of the district court's dismissal because plaintiff had not exhausted his appeal) and Okoro v. Bohman, 164 F. 3d 1059, 1061 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1999)(commenting that previous case dismissed as frivolous under Heck). Thus, the undersigned concludes that this action is frivolous under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and (g) and should be deemed a strike under this statute. The plaintiff's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.



Robert S. Carr  
Robert S. Carr  
United States Magistrate Judge

August 21, 2006  
Charleston, South Carolina

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In Grant, the court recognized that "the question may be raised whether a cause dismissed pursuant to Heck considerations should be considered for purposes of computing the three strikes..." but followed the decisions of Sandles and Sanders.

**Notice of Right to File Objections to Magistrate Judge's "Report and Recommendation"**  
**&**  
**The Serious Consequences of a Failure to Do So**

The parties are hereby notified that any objections to the attached Report and Recommendation (or Order and Recommendation) must be filed within ten (10) days of the date of service. 28 U.S.C. § 636 and Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6. A magistrate judge makes only a recommendation, and the authority to make a final determination in this case rests with the United States District Judge. *See Mathews v. Weber*, 423 U.S. 261, 270-271 (1976); and *Estrada v. Witkowski*, 816 F. Supp. 408, 410, 1993 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 3411 (D.S.C. 1993).

During the ten-day period for filing objections, but not thereafter, a party must file with the Clerk of Court specific, written objections to the Report and Recommendation, if he or she wishes the United States District Judge to consider any objections. Any written objections must *specifically identify* the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made *and* the basis for such objections. *See Keeler v. Pea*, 782 F. Supp. 42, 43-44, 1992 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 8250 (D.S.C. 1992); and *Oliverson v. West Valley City*, 875 F. Supp. 1465, 1467, 1995 U.S. Dist. LEXIS® 776 (D.Utah 1995). Failure to file written objections shall constitute a waiver of a party's right to further judicial review, including appellate review, if the recommendation is accepted by the United States District Judge. *See United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91, 94 & n. 4 (4th Cir.), cert. denied, *Schronce v. United States*, 467 U.S. 1208 (1984); and *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841, 845-847 & nn. 1-3 (4th Cir. 1985). Moreover, if a party files specific objections to a portion of a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, but does not file specific objections to other portions of the Report and Recommendation, that party waives appellate review of the portions of the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation to which he or she did not object. In other words, a party's failure to object to one issue in a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation precludes that party from subsequently raising that issue on appeal, even if objections are filed on other issues. *Howard v. Secretary of HHS*, 932 F.2d 505, 508-509, 1991 U.S. App. LEXIS® 8487 (6th Cir. 1991). *See also Praylow v. Martin*, 761 F.2d 179, 180 n. 1 (4th Cir.) (party precluded from raising on appeal factual issue to which it did not object in the district court), cert. denied, 474 U.S. 1009 (1985). In *Howard, supra*, the Court stated that general, non-specific objections are *not* sufficient:

A general objection to the entirety of the [magistrate judge's] report has the same effects as would a failure to object. The district court's attention is not focused on any specific issues for review, thereby making the initial reference to the [magistrate judge] useless. \* \* \* This duplication of time and effort wastes judicial resources rather than saving them, and runs contrary to the purposes of the Magistrates Act. \* \* \* We would hardly countenance an appellant's brief simply objecting to the district court's determination without explaining the source of the error.

*Accord Lockert v. Faulkner*, 843 F.2d 1015, 1017-1019 (7th Cir. 1988), where the Court held that the appellant, who proceeded *pro se* in the district court, was barred from raising issues on appeal that he did not specifically raise in his objections to the district court:

Just as a complaint stating only 'I complain' states no claim, an objection stating only 'I object' preserves no issue for review. \* \* \* A district judge should not have to guess what arguments an objecting party depends on when reviewing a [magistrate judge's] report.

*See also Branch v. Martin*, 886 F.2d 1043, 1046, 1989 U.S. App. LEXIS® 15,084 (8th Cir. 1989) ("no *de novo* review if objections are untimely or general"), which involved a *pro se* litigant; and *Goney v. Clark*, 749 F.2d 5, 7 n. 1 (3rd Cir. 1984) ("plaintiff's objections lacked the specificity to trigger *de novo* review"). This notice, hereby, apprises the plaintiff of the consequences of a failure to file specific, written objections. *See Wright v. Collins, supra*; and *Small v. Secretary of HHS*, 892 F.2d 15, 16, 1989 U.S. App. LEXIS® 19,302 (2nd Cir. 1989). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections addressed as follows:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk  
 United States District Court  
 Post Office Box 835  
 Charleston, South Carolina 29402